Information for Candidates

Introducing IELTS to test takers

ielts.org

The test that opens doors around the world

This booklet contains important information to help you prepare for your IELTS test.

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is designed to assess the language ability of people who want to study or work where English is the language of communication.

IELTS is recognised and accepted by over 10,000 organisations worldwide, including universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies. For a list of organisations that accept IELTS scores, visit ielts.org/recognition.

Accessible and convenient
IELTS is offered up to four times a month in more than 140 countries. Tests are held on Saturdays and Thursdays. To find out test dates in your area, please contact your nearest IELTS test centre. A list of all IELTS test locations worldwide is available at ielts.org.

The international test
IELTS is internationally focused in its content. For example, texts and tasks are sourced from publications from all over the English-speaking world; a range of native-speaker accents (North American, Australian, New Zealand, British etc.) are used in the Listening test; and all standard varieties of English are accepted in test takers' written and spoken responses.

The test that's tried and trusted
IELTS has been developed by some of the world's leading experts in language assessment, and is supported by an extensive programme of research, validation and test development.

The level of the test
IELTS is designed to assess English language skills across a wide range of levels. There is no such thing as a pass or fail in IELTS. Results are reported as band scores on a scale from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest).

The IELTS band score scale	
9	Expert user
8	Very good user
7	Good user
6	Competent user
5	Modest user
4	Limited user
3	Extremely limited user
2	Intermittent user
1	Non user
0	Did not attempt the test

IELTS for UK Visas and Immigration
Find out how you can use an IELTS result for this purpose at **ielts.org/unitedkingdom**.
For more information on going to or staying in the UK, visit **gov.uk**.

Preparing for your test

Make sure you are ready to demonstrate your English

1. Familiarise yourself with the format of the test by reading this booklet. If you would like more information about the format of the test and the question types used, you can find the test specifications at ielts.org/testformat.
2. Practice using sample questions from ielts.org/sampletest.
3. Consider doing a practice test. Two volumes of *Official IELTS Practice Materials* are available for purchase from test centres or at ielts.org/prepare. These materials include a full practice test with answers, and sample Writing and Speaking performances with examiner comments.
4. Consider enrolling in a preparation course to improve your performance in the test. IELTS test centres and language schools around the world offer IELTS preparation courses.

More information is available from:
ielts.org
britishcouncil.org/takeielts
ieltsessentials.com/prepare
cambridgeenglish.org/ielts
ielts.org/usa

Know the IELTS rules and regulations

It's important to familiarise yourself with the IELTS rules and regulations. These are laid out in the **Notice to Candidates** and **Declaration** which are included in the application form. When you sign the application form declaration, or agree to the terms online, you are confirming that you have read and understood the IELTS rules and regulations and agree to abide by them.

Register as soon as possible

When you feel you are ready to take the test, you need to register for a test date with an IELTS centre. Contact the centre as soon as possible, as the number of test takers who can take the test on a particular date may be limited. You will need to pay the test fee when you register.

Tell your centre if you have special requirements

In order to ensure that the language ability of all test takers is assessed fairly and objectively, IELTS provides a comprehensive service for test takers who have special requirements, including specific learning difficulties, hearing difficulties, visual difficulties, medical conditions or infant feeding.

If you require a modified version of the test, for example a Large Print or Braille version, you must give the test centre three months' notice. This notice period is necessary for the modified test version to be prepared. If your circumstances require special administrative arrangements to be made, for example if you need extra time or you need to use access technology such as a screen reader, you must give the test centre six weeks' notice. Please contact your test centre to discuss your requirements. Any special arrangements agreed are in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Test format

There are two modules to choose from – Academic and General Training.

IELTS Academic

IELTS Academic is for test takers wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration.

IELTS General Training

IELTS General Training is for test takers wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK), and for those wishing to train or study at below degree level.

Each organisation sets its own entry requirements. In some cases both Academic or General Training may be accepted. If you are in doubt as to which to take, you should contact the organisation you are applying to in order to check their requirements.

You are tested on all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking, unless you have an exemption due to a disability (see section on special requirements). Everyone takes the same Listening and Speaking tests. There are different Reading and Writing tests for IELTS Academic and General Training.

The Listening, Reading and Writing tests must be completed on the same day. The order in which these tests are taken may vary. There are no breaks between these three tests. The Speaking test may be taken up to seven days before or after the other three tests.

The four components of the IELTS test

Listening

Timing
Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes' transfer time).

Questions
There are 40 questions. A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion, short-answer questions.

Test Parts
There are 4 sections:

Section 1 is a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context (e.g. a conversation in an accommodation agency).

Section 2 is a monologue set in an everyday social context (e.g. a speech about local facilities or a talk about the arrangements for meals during a conference).

Section 3 is a conversation between up to four people set in an educational or training context (e.g. a university tutor and a student discussing an assignment, or a group of students planning a research project).

Section 4 is a monologue on an academic subject (e.g. a university lecture).

Each section is heard once only.

A variety of voices and native-speaker accents are used.

Skills assessed
A wide range of listening skills are assessed, including:
- understanding of main ideas
- understanding of specific factual information
- recognising opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker
- following the development of an argument.

Marking
Each correct answer receives 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

Reading

Timing
60 minutes (no extra transfer time).

Questions
There are 40 questions. A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying a writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not Given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion, short-answer questions.

Test Parts
There are 3 sections. The total text length is 2,150-2,750 words.

Academic Reading
Each section contains one long text. Texts are authentic and are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been written for a non-specialist audience and are on academic topics of general interest. Texts are appropriate to, and accessible to, test takers entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. Texts range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms, then a simple glossary is provided.

General Training Reading
Section 1 contains two or three short factual texts, one of which may be composite (consisting of 6-8 short texts related by topic, e.g. hotel advertisements). Topics are relevant to everyday life in an English-speaking country.

Section 2 contains two short factual texts focusing on work-related issues (e.g. applying for jobs, company policies, pay and conditions, workplace facilities, staff development and training).

Section 3 contains one longer, more complex text on a topic of general interest.

Texts are authentic and are taken from notices, advertisements, company handbooks, official documents, books, magazines and newspapers.

Skills assessed
A wide range of reading skills are assessed, including:
- reading for gist
- reading for main ideas
- reading for detail
- understanding inferences and implied meaning
- recognising writer's opinions, attitudes and purpose
- following the development of an argument.

Marking
Each correct answer receives 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

For test specifications visit **ielts.org/testformat**

For marking information visit **ielts.org/criteria**

For sample questions visit **ielts.org/sampletest**

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Writing

Timing
60 minutes

Tasks
There are 2 tasks. You are required to write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.

Test Parts
There are 2 parts.

Academic Writing
In Task 1, you are presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and are asked to describe, summarise or explain the information in your own words. You may be asked to describe and explain data, describe the stages of a process, how something works or describe an object or event.

In Task 2, you are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem.

The issues raised are of general interest to, suitable for and easily understood by test takers entering undergraduate or postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration. Responses to Task 1 and Task 2 should be written in an academic, semi-formal/neutral style.

General Training Writing
In Task 1, you are presented with a situation and are asked to write a letter requesting information or explaining the situation. The letter may be personal or semi-formal/neutral in style.

In Task 2, you are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The essay can be slightly more personal in style than the Academic Writing Task 2 essay.

Topics are of general interest.

Skills assessed
In both tasks, you are assessed on your ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of:
- content
- the organisation of ideas
- the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar.

Academic Writing
In Task 1, depending on the task type, you are assessed on your ability to organise, present and possibly compare data; to describe the stages of a process or procedure; to describe an object or event or sequence of events; to explain how something works.

In Task 2, depending on the task type, you are assessed on your ability to present a solution to a problem; to present and justify an opinion; to compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

General Training Writing
In Task 1, depending on the task type, you are assessed on your ability to engage in personal correspondence in order to: elicit and provide general factual information; express needs, wants, likes and dislikes; express opinions (views, complaints etc.).

In Task 2, you are assessed on your ability to provide general factual information; to outline a problem and present a solution; to present and possibly justify an opinion; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

Marking
You are assessed on your performance on each task by certificated IELTS examiners according to the IELTS Writing test assessment criteria (Task Achievement/Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy). The public version of the assessment criteria can be found at ielts.org/criteria.

Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

Speaking

Timing
11-14 minutes

Test Parts
There are 3 parts.

Part 1 Introduction and interview (4-5 minutes)
The examiner introduces him/herself and asks you to introduce yourself and confirm your identity. The examiner asks you general questions on familiar topics, e.g. home, family, work, studies and interests.

Part 2 Individual long turn (3-4 minutes)
The examiner gives you a task card which asks you to talk about a particular topic and which includes points you can cover in your talk. You are given 1 minute to prepare your talk, and are given a pencil and paper to make notes. You talk for 1-2 minutes on the topic. The examiner may then ask you one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3 Two-way discussion (4-5 minutes)
The examiner asks further questions which are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give you an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.

Skills assessed
A wide range of speaking skills are assessed, including:
- the ability to communicate opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences and situations by answering a range of questions
- the ability to speak at length on a given topic using appropriate language and organising ideas coherently
- the ability to express and justify opinions and to analyse, discuss and speculate about issues.

Marking
You are assessed on your performance throughout the test by certificated IELTS examiners according to the IELTS Speaking test assessment criteria (Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, Pronunciation). The public version of the assessment criteria can be found at ielts.org/criteria.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

Test tips

Listening

- Each recording in the Listening test is heard once only.
- You will be given time to read through the questions before you listen.
- As you listen, write your answers on the question paper. At the end of the test, you will have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. It is essential that you transfer your answers to the answer sheet as nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.
- You must write your answers in pencil.
- An example of a completed Listening answer sheet is given on the next page.
- 'Completion' question types (e.g. note completion):
  - Pay attention to the word limit. For example, if you are asked to complete a sentence using NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS, and the correct answer is 'leather coat', the answer 'coat made of leather' would be incorrect.
  - Transfer only the missing word(s) to the answer sheet. For example, if you have to complete the note 'in the … ', and the correct answer is 'morning', the answer 'in the morning' would be incorrect.
  - You will hear the word(s) you need to use in the recording. You will not need to change the form of the word(s) you hear.
  - Pay attention to spelling and grammar: you will lose marks for mistakes.
  - You may write your answers in lower case or in capitals.

Reading

- You may write your answers directly on the answer sheet or you may write them on the question paper and transfer them to the answer sheet before the end of the test. You will not be given extra time to transfer answers at the end of the test. Nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.
- You must write your answers in pencil.
- An example of a completed Reading answer sheet is given on the next page.
- 'Completion' question types (e.g. note completion):
  - The same rules apply to 'completion' question types as in Listening (see above).
  - The word(s) you use must be taken from the Reading text. You will not need to change the form of the word(s) in the text.

Writing

- You may write your answers in pencil or pen.
- Pay attention to the number of words required for each task. You will lose marks if you do not write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.
- You should spend approximately 20 minutes on Task 1 and approximately 40 minutes on Task 2.
- You must write your answers in full; answers written in note form or in bullet points will lose marks.
- Pay attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation; you will lose marks for mistakes.
- You may write your answers entirely in capitals if you wish.
- You may make notes on the question paper but nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

Test results

The Test Report Form

You will receive a Test Report Form which reports a score for each of the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking), as well as an overall band score. Half band scores may be awarded to indicate a strong performance within a particular band. You can find more information on score processing and score interpretation at ielts.org/criteria.

Results will be available 13 days after the test. At some test centres test takers can collect their results on the 13th day. At other test centres results are mailed to test takers on the 13th day. Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone or by scan or email.

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM

Test Report Form — ACADEMIC

Centre Number: GB599 | Date: 13/FEB/2014 | Candidate Number: 000193

Candidate Details

Family Name: MARTINEZ

First Name: JOHN

Date of Birth: 28/09/1984

Country of Nationality: AFGHANISTAN

First Language: AFRIKAANS

Test Results

Listening | Reading | Writing | Speaking | Overall Band Score

Administrator Comments

Centre stamp | Validation stamp

Administrator's Signature

Date: 20/05/2014 | Test Report Form Number

BRITISH COUNCIL | idp | Cambridge Assessment English

SAMPLE

You will receive only one copy of the Test Report Form. It's important that you keep it safe as replacement Test Report Forms cannot be issued. Test centres will send copies of your Test Report Form to up to five organisations free of charge.

Preview your results online

You can preview your results online 13 days after the test. Results remain online for 28 days. Please note that the online preview of results should not be used as an official confirmation of your performance.

Results validity period

Organisations will not usually accept a Test Report Form that is more than two years old unless you provide evidence that you have actively maintained or tried to improve your English since taking the test. The IELTS Test Partners cannot confirm the validity of test results that are more than two years old.

Re-taking IELTS

There are no restrictions on re-taking IELTS. You can register for a test as soon as you feel you are ready to do so. Please note that your score is unlikely to increase unless you make a significant effort to improve your English before re-taking the test. More information is available from ielts.org/resitting.

Enquiries on results

If you are unhappy with your test result, you can apply for a re-mark (Enquiry on Results) at the centre where you took the test. You must make the application no later than six weeks after the test date. You can choose which test components are re-marked. There is a fee for this service which will be refunded if your score on any component is increased. Enquiries on Results take six to eight weeks to complete.

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Completing the Listening/Reading answer sheets

IELTS five steps to success

1 Enquiry

Contact details for all IELTS test centres worldwide can be found at ielts.org, where you can also download the application form.

2 Registration

Read through all the information you receive with the application form carefully. Complete the paper application form or online registration and submit it to your nearest test centre. You will need to enclose the test fee or make the payment online.

Make sure you enter the number of your identity document (your passport or national identity card) and attach a clear colour photocopy or scanned copy of your identity document to the application form. The identity document must be valid at the time of registration and the same ID document must be presented on the day of the test.

3 Confirmation

The test centre will give you written confirmation of the date and time of the test. Your Speaking test time will be scheduled on the same day as the written tests or on a different day within a 7-day window before or after the written tests. The test centre will confirm your Speaking test time.

4 Test day

Your identity will be checked on the day of the test and before the Speaking test. You must present the same identity document that you used when you registered for the test. Your photograph will be taken as an additional security measure, and it will appear on your IELTS Test Report Form. In addition a finger scan may be taken.

5 Results

Results will be available 13 days after the test. At some test centres test takers can collect their results on the 13th day. At other test centres results are mailed to test takers on the 13th day. Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone or by scan or email.

A preview of your results is available online 13 days after the test. Results will remain online for 28 days. Please note that the online preview of your results should not be used as an official confirmation of your performance.

Find out more at ielts.org

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ielts.org/australia

ielts.org/canada

ielts.org/newzealand

Your privacy
The IELTS Test Partners recognise and support the right of genuine IELTS test candidates to privacy. For more information visit ielts.org/privacy.

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IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English. The IELTS test is designed and set by the world's leading experts in language assessment to give a true picture of a test taker's language skills. IELTS Bands 4-9 (NQF levels Entry 3 to Level 3) are accredited by Ofqual, England's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation.